

# Food and nutrition security in India



## Context

India is a country of contrasts. In spite of rapid economic growth, India has seen very little improvement in its living conditions, with over 175 million people living on less than 1.90 US dollars a day. More than 208 million – around 15 per cent of the population – are suffering from malnutrition, and 31 per cent of children under five years are small for their age. In the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the nutrition situation is even more severe. More than 35 per cent of children under five and more than 20 per cent of women (15-49

years) are affected by malnutrition. The causes of malnutrition are lack of access to adequate food, insufficient nutritional diversity among mothers and children, poor hygiene behaviour and a lack of knowledge about appropriate food preparation. Governmental frontline workers who provide nutrition counselling in villages play a central role in improving the nutrition situation of women and young children in rural areas. However, the social workers often have low counselling skills and a low level of education.

## Activities in India

### Integrated approach of participatory nutrition education, community nutrition gardens and nutrition-sensitive micro-planning.

- ➔ **Improved nutrition and hygiene practices**  
Through participatory trainings in villages, women of childbearing age are sensitised on dietary diversity, social-security benefits and hygiene practices.
- ➔ **Availability of diverse nutritious food**  
Women self-help groups are supported in establishing year-round community nutrition gardens.
- ➔ **Knowledge management and ensuring a sustainable impact**  
Successful measures to improve the nutrition situation for women and young children are being taken over by relevant partners and implemented on a broader basis. One example

of this is materials used to train female state nutritionists being incorporated into the existing training scheme run by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD).

### Our objective

The nutrition situation is improved for nutrition-insecure people, especially women of childbearing age and young children, in four districts of Madhya Pradesh and in two districts of Maharashtra.



## Regions

States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

## Budget and term

EUR 17.25 million / March 2015 to March 2025

## Commissioning party

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

## Implementation partners

Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, Welthungerhilfe and local non-governmental organisations

## Lead executing agency

Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)

## Target groups

424,000 women of reproductive age between 15 and 49 years and 86,000 infants between six and 23 months

## Sustainable Development Goals



## Example of our work

The aim of providing nutritional education for women is to enhance their awareness of the variety of local food available, nutrition for young children and hygiene practices, as well as to encourage a change in behaviour. They are also informed about their rights to social security benefits relating to food and nutrition. With this in mind, social workers are trained in how to deliver content to the women over the course of 20 training units, which follow an approach based on participatory learning and action.

One participant, Neeta Yadav, gave the following assessment: "The training sessions taught me how important it is to include different food groups when feeding my family. Now I add vegetables to rice- and lentil-based dishes, for example."

## Results

- » In 20 training sessions, the participatory learning and action approach has already reached 140,000 women of reproductive age.
- » 20 community nutrition gardens have been successfully piloted, which are maintained and cultivated by a total of 255 women.

- » The dietary diversity according to the Individual Dietary Diversity Score of women was increased by more than one food group, from 3.6 food groups to 5.3.
- » The adequate feeding of young children according to the Minimum Acceptable Diet was increased from 17 % to 28 %.
- » Since February 2019, 99,538 female frontline state social workers and their supervisors have registered with the online training platform developed in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) to boost skills and expertise in nutrition and teaching. A total of 25,070 trainees have started the course and 5,545 have already completed it.
- » 22,401 centres in Madhya Pradesh are using fingerprint devices to record food distribution, and pulses have been incorporated into the Targeted Public Distribution System. This means that 53 million people now have better access to a greater variety of foods.



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